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# Massachusetts

## The Great Seal of Massachusetts



The STATE SEAL, adopted by Governor John Hancock and the Council on December 13, 1780 and made official by the General Court on June 4, 1885, is circular and bears a representation of the arms of the Commonwealth encircled with the words, "Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis" (Seal of the Republic of Massachusetts). The final form of the seal was determined by a statewide contest.

The arms, according to legislative enactment, consist of "a shield having a blue field or surface with an Indian thereon, dressed in a shirt and moccasins, holding in his right hand a bow, and in his left hand an arrow, point downward, all of gold; and, in the upper corner of the field, above his right arm, a silver star with five points. The crest is a wreath of blue and gold, on which in gold is a right arm, bent at the elbow, clothed and ruffled, with the hand grasping a broadsword". The shield's shape is called "Plantagenet"; the Native American model used was of the Algonquin nation; the arrow points downward to indicate that the Indian is peaceful; and the star indicates that Massachusetts was one of the original thirteen states; it was sixth. The sword illustrates the Latin motto that is written in gold on a blue ribbon around the bottom of the shield: "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem". This is the second of two lines written about 1659 by Algernon Sydney, English soldier and politician, in the Book of Mottoes in the King's Library in Copenhagen, Denmark. It was adopted in 1775 by the Provincial Congress and means, "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty".

\*The above information is from [www.magnet.state.ma.us](http://www.magnet.state.ma.us).

State [Statute](#).

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## The History of the Arms and Great Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Seals, such as those that appear on documents certified by the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have a long history and were mentioned even in the Bible. They were widely used many centuries ago because most persons, even of high rank and wealth, did not read or write. Acceptance of a document was signified by making an impression of one's coat of arms into a blob of soft wax, usually with an engraved signet ring. There was a general reluctance to affix seals to documents until the absolute certainty of the contents could be confirmed. This eventually led to the idea that documents of state and other important personal papers, such as deeds, should contain a seal that bore witness to their authenticity.

In 1629, King Charles I granted a charter to the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which included the authority to use a seal. It featured an Indian holding an arrow pointed down in a gesture of peace, with the words "Come over and help us," emphasizing missionary and commercial intentions of the original colonists. This seal was used from 1629 to 1686, shortly after the charter was annulled, and again from 1689-1692.

From 1686 to 1689 Governor Edmund Andros used a seal with two sides, one side showing King James II with an Englishman and Indian kneeling in front of him, the other side showing the lion and unicorn of the royal coat of arms. When the Province of Massachusetts began in 1692, the royal coat of arms of England, combined with a motto specific to the reigning monarch, became the official seal. Royal governors affixed their personal seals to commissions issued to officers in the military service.

When the conflict between the province and England began in 1775, General Thomas Gage, the royal governor, had custody of the province seal. As his authority was no longer recognized by the province it became necessary to establish a new public seal. The General Court passed an order on July 28, 1775, appointing a committee to consider "what is necessary to be done relative to a Colony Seal." The design adopted was that of an English-American man holding the Magna Carta. The seal was engraved by Paul Revere, whose original signed bill for the work is located in the Massachusetts Archives. A motto in Latin was also chosen - "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem" - which remains the motto of the Commonwealth today. Freely translated means, "By the sword we seek peace, but peace only under liberty." It was written about 1659 and is attributed to the famous English patriot, Algernon Sydney.

Soon after its first meeting under the Massachusetts Constitution, the state legislature appointed a committee "to consider & determine upon a Seal for this Commonwealth." A month later, on December 13, 1780, the Council and Governor John Hancock accepted Nathan Cushing's design for a new seal. Paul Revere was once again commissioned to engrave the seal, which returned to its original design of a native



The first seal of the MA Bay Colony

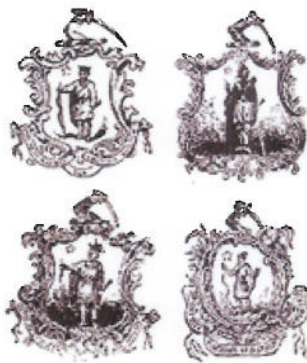


Governor Andros' seal (sides 1 & 2)





"By the sword we seek peace,  
but peace only under liberty"



Engravers' variations on the Seal  
- 1870s



Seal used prior to 1898



The Great Seal today

American Indian. Revere presented his bill on December 23, 1780 - the signed original is located at the Massachusetts Archives. The Council provided only a casual description of how the seal should look, so subsequent engravers varied the appearance of the seal.

It was not until June 4, 1885, that the legislature prescribed the seal in its present form. According to St. 1885, c. 288:

*The great seal of the Commonwealth shall be circular in form, and shall bear upon its face a representation of the arms of the Commonwealth, with an inscription round about such representation, consisting of the words "Sigillum Reipublicae Massachusettensis"; but the colors of such arms shall not be an essential part of said seal, and an impression from an engraved seal according to said design, on any commission, paper or document of any kind, shall be valid to all intents and purposes whether such colors, or the representation of such colors by the customary heraldic lines or marks, be employed or not.*

The arms, which form the central part of the Great Seal

*...shall consist of a shield, whereof the field or surface is blue, and thereon an Indian dressed in his shirt and moccasins, holding in his right hand a bow, and in his left hand an arrow, point downward, all of gold; and in the upper corner above his right arm a silver star with five points. The crest shall be a wreath of blue and gold, whereon in his right arm, bent at the elbow, and clothed and ruffled, the hand grasping a broadsword all of gold. The motto shall be "Ense petit placidam sub libertate quietem."*

Starting in 1894 there was an attempt to provide a more accurate representation of the appearance of the Indian on the Great Seal. Secretary of the Commonwealth William M. Olin consulted various ethnologists, and the Indian was redesigned within the restrictions of the 1780 and 1885 laws. In 1898, Edmund H. Garrett's design was made the official representation of the coat of arms for the state, according to St. 1898, c. 519:

*The coat-of-arms as drawn and emblazoned under the direction of the present secretary of the Commonwealth, and now deposited in the office of said secretary, is hereby adopted and declared to be the official representation of the coat-of-arms of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and all designs of said coat-of-arms for official use shall conform strictly to said representation.*

The Great Seal is in the custody of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, who is required by the Constitution to affix an impression of it to all commissions (official appointments) issued in the name of the Commonwealth. The use of the coat of arms and the Great Seal of the Commonwealth for advertising or commercial purposes is prohibited by law. In addition to commissions, all records certified by the Secretary must bear the Great Seal. Permission to use the coat of arms and the Great Seal must be obtained from the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Contact the Public Records Division at 617-727-2832 with any questions regarding appropriate uses.



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# Michigan

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## The Great Seal of Michigan



The Great Seal of the State of Michigan was inspired by the seal used by the Hudson Bay Fur Company. Michigan's second governor, Lewis Cass, presented the idea to the Constitutional Convention, and it was accepted on June 2, 1835.

At the center of the seal, there is an image of a man standing resolutely at the tip of a peninsula, watching the sun rise, his rifle ready. On either side of the shield, a majestic moose and elk stand facing each other keeping the shield securely in place.

And just above the shield, an eagle adds to the majesty. Each of these proud animals lends credence to the motto on the shield, "Tuebor", or "I will defend". Above the eagle is the familiar motto "E pluribus unum", or "From many, one". Below the shield are the words "Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice", or "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you." And encircling all of this are the words "The Great Seal of the State of Michigan".

State [Statute](#).

[Coat of Arms](#).

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## Great Seal



Michigan's Great Seal was designed by Lewis Cass, Michigan's second governor. The seal was patterned after the seal of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. It was presented to the Constitutional Convention of 1835 and adopted on June 2, 1835 as the official Great Seal of Michigan.

At the top of the Seal are the words, "E Pluribus Unum." These words come from our national motto meaning, "From many, one." Or, in other words, forming one nation from many states.

Below is the American Eagle, our national bird. This symbolizes the superior authority and jurisdiction or control of the United States. In its claws the eagle holds three arrows and an olive branch with 13 olives. The arrows show that our nation is ready to defend its principles. The olive branch means we want peace. The olives stand for the first 13 states.

"Tuebor," meaning, "I will defend," refers to Michigan's frontier position.

The shield is held by two animals representing Michigan, the elk on the left and the moose on the right. Michigan is on an international boundary, and the figure of the man shows his right hand raised in peace. The left hand holds a gun to say that although we love peace, we are ready to defend our state and nation.

"Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice" means, "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you." It is believed this refers to the Lower Peninsula. The Upper Peninsula was added in 1837, to pay for the loss of a strip of land on our southern border, given to Ohio when Congress made Michigan a state.

The words, "The Great Seal of the State of Michigan, A.D. MDCCCXXXV," complete the State Seal. When you take away these words and border, this becomes the Coat of Arms of the State of Michigan.

Changes in the Great Seal have been made from time to time. However, the present Seal has not been changed since 1911. No



facsimile or reproduction of the Great Seal can be used in a manner unconnected with official functions of the state. (MCL 2.45) A person who violates any provision of the Great Seal Act is guilty of a misdemeanor (MCL 2.46).

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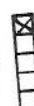
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# Minnesota

## The Great Seal of Minnesota



The Great Seal of the State of Minnesota became official in 1861, with the present design legislated in 1983. It depicts a barefoot farmer plowing his field near St. Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River. His axe is driven into a tree trunk, with his rifle and powderhorn nearby. An Indian on horseback rides into the scene ahead of a fiery sunrise. The state motto, "L'Etoile du Nord", or "Star of the North", appears on a banner above the scenery. Around around these images is the outermost ring, which reads "The Great Seal of the State of

Minnesota". The bottom of the outer ring contains the date 1858, which is when Minnesota gained statehood.

State [Statute](#).

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## The Great Seal of the State of Minnesota is a circular emblem. The outer ring contains the text "THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA" in red capital letters. Inside this ring is a yellow border with small red stars. The central scene depicts a Native American on a brown horse, holding a bow and arrow, and a pioneer in a red shirt and tan pants, walking towards the right. The background shows a landscape with a river, trees, and a rising sun. A red banner at the top of the central scene reads "ETOILE DU NORD". At the bottom of the seal, the year "1858" is inscribed in red, flanked by two red stars.

The state seal depicts a settler plowing his field with the Falls of St. Anthony and the setting sun in the background. A Native American is shown on horseback riding toward the settler. The state motto appears on a red ribbon superimposed on the picture itself. The date of the founding of the state, 1858, appears beneath the picture. This is the fourth version of the seal. The original version, drawn by Seth Eastman while Minnesota was still a territory, depicted a Native American galloping east, not west, into the setting sun. The Latin phrase "Quo sursum velo videre" ("I want to see what lies beyond") represented the pioneer heritage of Minnesota, but was unfortunately misspelled. When Minnesota became a state in 1858 the seal was corrected. The Native American was depicted galloping east and the Latin phrase was changed to the state motto "L'Etoile du Nord". When Minnesotans began questioning the depiction of Native Americans on the state seal in the 1960's the seal was changed again. The new seal depicted a white settler, not a Native American, galloping off into the sunset. In 1983 the fourth and current state seal was approved by the legislature. Several state trees (the Norway Pine) were added and the settler on horseback was replaced with a Native American on horseback galloping toward the farmer.

## Minnesota: State Name, Flag, Seal, Song, Bird, Flower, and Other Symbols



History of Minnesota







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### State Seal

The official seal shows a barefoot farmer plowing a field near St. Anthony Falls on the Mississippi River. The farmer's axe, gun, and powderhorn rest on a nearby stump, as he looks at an Indian riding a horse. Minnesota's state motto "L'Etoile du Nord," French for "star of the north," also appears on the seal.

[Minnesota Statutes 2004 - 1.135 State seal](#)



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# Mississippi

## The Great Seal of Mississippi



When Mississippi gained statehood in 1817, it decided to use the seal that it had been using since 1798 when Mississippi was still a territory. And even today, this is Mississippi's Great Seal. The design of the seal is based upon the American eagle of the national arms.

The eagle is proudly positioned in the center of the seal, with its wings spread wide and its head held high. A bunting of stars and stripes adorns its chest. In its talons, the eagle grasps an olive branch symbolizing a desire for peace and a quiver of arrows representing the power to wage war. The outer circle of the seal holds the words "The Great Seal of the State of Mississippi".

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## State Symbols

**State Bird:** Mockingbird



**Coat of Arms:**

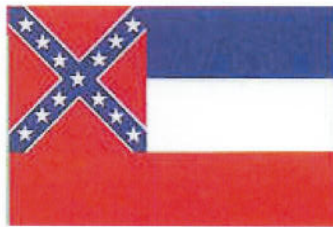


**State Flower and Tree:** Magnolia



**State Seal:**



**State Flag:****State Toy**

On March 13, 2003, bill 834 was signed by the governor making the Teddy Bear the official state toy of Mississippi. The Teddy Bear came into being after a bear hunt in Onward, Mississippi, that President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt attended.

**Car Tag:**

Click on the car tag if you would like to order a sample tag.

**State Beverage:** Milk

**State Butterfly:** Spicebush Swallowtail

**State Dance:** Square Dance

**State Fish:** Largemouth or Black Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

**State Fossil:** The Prehistoric Whale

**State Insect:** Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*)

**State Land Mammal:** Whitetailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)

**State Reptile:** Alligator

**State Shell:** Oyster Shell (*Crassostrea virginica*)

**State Song:** **GO MISSISSIPPI**, written by Houston Davis

**State Stone:** Petrified Wood

**State Water Fowl:** Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

**State Water Mammal:** Bottlenosed Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

**State Wildflower:** *Coriopsis*





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*Y/M* 4/05/05

## Missouri Secretary of State, Robin Carnahan

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### State Symbols of Missouri



#### The Great Seal of Missouri

The Great Seal was designed by Judge Robert William Wells and adopted by the Missouri General Assembly on January 11, 1822. The center of the state seal is composed of two parts. On the right is the United States coat-of-arms containing the bald eagle. In its claws are arrows and olive branches, signifying that the power of war and peace lies with the U.S. federal government. On the left side of the shield, the state side, are a grizzly bear and a silver crescent moon. The crescent symbolizes Missouri at the time of the state seal's creation, a state of small population and wealth which would increase like the new or crescent moon; it also symbolizes the "second son," meaning Missouri was the second state formed out of the Louisiana Territory.

This shield is encircled by a belt inscribed with the motto, "United we stand, divided we fall," which indicates Missouri's advantage as a member of the United States. The two grizzlies on either side of the shield symbolize the state's strength and its citizens' bravery. The bears stand atop a scroll bearing the **state motto**, "Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto," which means, "Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law." Below this scroll are the Roman numerals for 1820, the year Missouri began its functions as a state.

The helmet above the shield represents state sovereignty, and the large star atop the helmet surrounded by 23 smaller stars signified Missouri's status as the 24th state. The cloud around the large star indicates the problems Missouri had in becoming a state. The whole state seal is enclosed by a scroll bearing the words, "The Great Seal of the State of Missouri." (RSMo.10.060)





# Missouri

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## The Great Seal of Missouri



The Great Seal of the State of Missouri was officially adopted by the General Assembly on January 11, 1822. Judge Robert William Wells, who was also a congressman, designed the seal. The center of the seal contains the bald eagle symbol of the nation on the right side, and, on the left, symbols representing the state. A grizzly bear represents strength and bravery; a crescent moon represents the newness of statehood and the potential for growth. Surrounding these symbols is the motto "United we stand, divided we fall". Two mighty grizzly

bears support this center shield. A scroll carries the state motto, "Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto", or "Let the welfare of the people be the supreme law." Missouri's date of statehood, 1820, is placed in Roman numerals below the scroll. A star representing each of the other states of the Union (Missouri became the 24th) graces the top portion of the seal. The outer circle of the seal bears the words "The Great Seal of the State of Missouri".

State [Statute](#).

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